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DIALOGUE

RELATING TO

A Few Articles in the Constitution

OF

A CERTAIN UNIVERSITY;

BETWEEN

MAJOR FLANNEGAN

AND

K

A FREETHINKER.

Some quod erat in Am, see gracum see Latinum

D U B L I N

M D C C L X X X .



TO THE
PROVOST AND FELLOWS
OF
TRINITY COLLEGE,

THE FOLLOWING

D I A L O G U E

IS WITH ALL RESPECT INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR MOST DEVOTED,

MOST OBEDIENT,

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.



A
D I A L O G U E
BETWEEN
MAJOR FLANNEGAN
AND
A F R E E T H I N K E R.

Maj. I Have been longing to chat a little with you, in regard to some matters which appear to be closely connected with our last conversation. — Whence comes it, that the knowledge of words or of obsolete tongues does not, in the eye of the intelligent, screen a man from the disgraceful imputation of ignorance, as well as skill in the relations of ideas, or an extensive acquaintance with things?

Free. The slightest reflection on the origin, superior dignity, and use of things, would have prevented that question. — Are not things the creatures of God? Are they not vastly more noble in themselves, and
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of far greater utility to mankind, than words, which, Hebrew excepted, are only the invention of man, and at best but the symbols of ideas ?

Maj. The difference betwixt them is indeed immense ; and so is the difference between the universities of Europe, and a few petty academies whereof things are the great objects. In the most flourishing of the former, is not matriculation limited to latinists ?

Free. Yes, and the limiting statute is, if I mistake not, variously and amply mischievous ; 'tis detrimental to the colleges, as it renders them far less populous than they would otherwise be ; 'tis pernicious to liberal erudition, as it copiously precludes the culture of the belles lettres and philosophy ; and by consequently favouring ignorance and barbarism, 'tis injurious to the nations which protect and foster those seminaries. Let our college but admit English scholars, and a flow of pupils or full chambers shall quickly enrich the fellows, polite literature and the sciences be generally studied, and the nation become proportionably polished and intelligent.

Maj. Should admittance be indulged to those who are not even smatterers in latin, the event would not, 'tis to be feared, verify your prediction ; for a cultivated intellect, and a refined taste, don't seem to be much coveted by the upper classes.

Free. Yet, a college education still preserving some remains of its pristine credit, and the innate gout for knowledge, though nigh starved in childhood, still retaining in the next stage some sparks of life, this
affection

affection and ambition would cause a vast resort of striplings to the university ; and volunteers, actuated by the love of science, seldom fail to make a figure.

Maj. There may be obstacles or difficulties in the way, whereof you are not aware.—Would South Britain, a nation once conspicuous for wisdom and policy, have confined matriculation in her colleges to the adepts in the Roman language, if the genuine and proper business of a college did not indispensably require skill in that tongue ?

Free. There was, indeed, a kind of necessity for it when the foundations of those nurseries were laid, because almost all the tomes of science and works of genius, at that time extant, were in Latin ; the British dialect was not then even a capable conduit, or competent vehicle : but now that the mother tongue is improved into an excellent medium, and amply stored with scientific and literary compositions of every species, should it not be preferred to a dead exotic, that can't be compassed without excessive drudgery ? — On introducing it, &c. in the place of obsolete dialects, the number of students in those seminaries would, as was lately remarked, multiply exceedingly ; that tedious, irksome labour, which depresses the genius of children, and alienates them from books, would be less * frequent ; and so their application to the true academic learning, and their mental powers, would be less languid than they have hitherto

* Many of the fellow commoners, and some of the pensioners, in our college, were forced to undergo all the plagues and thralldom of the grammar-school, merely that they might get a college education.

hitherto been. For these obvious reasons, the culture and diffusion of the belles lettres and the sciences, the ends for which colleges were erected, must, after this vicarious introduction, advance with a rapid velocity.

Maj. Was there any likelihood of contributing to the great purposes of such fabrics, or of promoting their founders chief aims, by this substitution, would not they who have authority to effect it betray, by acquiescing under the old statute, a violent dislike to those capital ends, or an aversion to the arts and sciences?

Free. Without giving into such a wild fancy, the acquiescence may be accounted for by the help of false modesty, veneration for antiquity, or implicit faith.

Maj. In trivial cases, I acknowledge, it might: but here, does not the acquiescence seemingly clash with duty, when taken in the strictest sense?

Free. Seemingly, do you say? If there be prudence in a small society's paying due attention to its own temporal interests, and exerting a suitable deportment; if there be gratitude or patriotism in its consulting the welfare of a country which maintains it, and for whose sake it was first established and is still protected; if there be humanity in rescuing and preserving myriads of innocents from a lingering bondage and wanton servitude; and if there be any virtue in humanity, gratitude, prudence, and patriotism—a college's duty must be deeply concerned in the demolishing of this statute.

Maj. How-

Maj. However, such statutes, were the causes you lately assigned for an acquiescence under them capable of preventing their demolition, would be pretty common.

Free. So in fact they are: should you examine all the codes in Europe, Africa, and Asia, you would meet with very few in which some statutes that are utterly abhorrent from reason might not be found.

Maj. I can't deny it; and though the statute, on the destruction of which you are bent, be one of that kind, yet I feel in myself a sort of hankering after that literature, for the benefit whereof it was enacted.

Free. Perhaps you imagine that we have no translations of those ancient classics, with which the undergraduates in Trinity are daily conversant; or rather, that this literature is of signal advantage to the youth who enter the regions of philosophy?

Maj. You not long since convinced me of the contrary,† and also shewed, that this literature is conducive to the formation of a libidinous turn. But is not the factitious ardour of a sensual propensity soon subdued, or quickly cooled, in a college?

Free. Rather inflamed, if it be a college where the Roman classics make a principal part of the course,
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† In those philosophic compositions which do honour to the mother tongue, the technical phrase is accurately defined; nay, in some of our English word-books, it is much better explained than in the best of your Latin Dictionaries, or Greek lexicons.

or where gallantry happens to derive a sanction from the reputed practice of the superintendents.

Maj. Surely you don't aim at throwing any reflections on the professors in our university, as if they were more incontinent than their reverend brethren?

Free. No : the imputations under which they suffer are chiefly owing to a statute that contains a prohibition, which an apostle expressly styles, the doctrine of devils. They, I say, are chiefly owing to a statute, than which no ordonnance, that had even a legion for its projector, could be more inconsonant to reason, and extensively hurtful to that society.

Maj. This statute, though indefensible, can't be altogether as black and mischievous as you allege : it may indeed be unjust, as it intrenches on an unalienable right ; anti-christian as it is condemned in the New Testament, and it may, by giving some colour to certain aspersions, be destructive to the purity of the students.

Free. As even the mental frame of either sex is calculated for an union with the other, is it not likewise unfitting and improper ? is it not unnatural, as 'tis a control on those instincts which nature implanted for the conservation of the species ? inhuman, as it must, if happiness consists in faculties and affections enjoying their objects, be a bar to felicity ? and if what is inhuman, unnatural, and unfitting, be discordant to the will of heaven, must it not be impious too ?—Besides, it is on another account injurious to the Hibernian university, as it has been often the
cause

cause of many a fellow's precipitate departure, who had merit and character sufficient to ennoble any seat of learning.

Maj. By this privation Trinity has, since its erection, been more than once reduced to that poor, low, desolate condition, that it could hardly produce a single fellow of any figure or note in the literary world.

Free. But had the fellows a statutable power to marry, such poverty or desolation might be reckoned amongst the impossibles; because a real philosopher, as he could not retire on a parish, without losing many advantages, and perhaps suffering in point of profit, would always stick by the college. Nay, if that statute which restrains matriculation to humanists, (a statute which as certainly clashes with rectitude as the fornicating ordonnance itself) was burnt, a fellowship would, to a man of genius and true erudition, be more profitable than any living in the college gift.

Maj. However, might not the abrogating of this statute be a cause of retarding the succession of fellowships, or of lessening the number of vacancies; which would, as deep philosophy is rarely studied except with a view to fellowships, be a great discouragement to learning?

Free. As long as the present mode of election, in consequence of a previous examen, subsists, we shall always have a number of fellows, each of whom will gladly give up his fellowship for a rectory; I say

gladly, as he may thereby serve both self and alma mater, and encourage too deep philosophic researches.

Maj. Not surely whilst the sons of the fellows are allowed to be candidates; for, during that period, there will be very few competitors, and profound philosophy will be less cultivated than ever.

Free. But were the fellows' sons and sons-in-law excluded by a positive statute, would the cultivation then decline?

Maj. No, but it would improve vastly; for fellowships would, after the rescission of the noxious statutes, be more desirable than they are now, or have hitherto been. And, as I never yet knew a fellow whose father or grandfire was in possession of a fellowship, an exclusive statute would not, I am persuaded, give any umbrage to the present set.

Free. Was the whole corps descended from their immediate predecessors, they would, I am confident, readily consent to the passing of that law, if the abolition of the anti-nuptial statute could not be otherwise obtained, or if there was a likelihood of its tending to the prosperity of philosophic erudition.

Maj. But why are you so anxious for the repeal of the statutes against which you have been declaiming; would not a compliance with them, if they be contradictory to the law of nature, seem vicious or immoral? nay, in the opinion of all lawyers and casuists, are not such statutes invalid, or null and void in themselves.

Free. How-

Free. However, since the infringers of them are notwithstanding exposed to the danger of a high penalty; and since each of their infractions must (it being generally thought the violation of both a law and an oath) have a dreadful effect on the manners of a canaille that is prone to trample on the laws, and to treat oaths with contempt; there is ground sufficient to excuse a little anxiety, and to render the fellows diligent and active in pursuing the reprobation of those statutes. But should they be diverted by a false modesty from the pursuit, ought not the visiters and bishops to embark in it; as many of them are neither strangers to the truth of what has been now advanced in regard to those statutes, nor to the malignant impression which the real, or even fancied deviations of the literati make on the minds of youth.

Maj. But should their lordships have no gout for that embarkation, what will the fate of your college be? if its constitution is at variance with rectitude, religion, and the public weal, can a public-spirited, religious, and virtuous people, have any hand in supporting it?

Free. You may as well ask, can an honest man take pickpockets under his patronage, as can the people you have now characterised countenance such a college: and since there are some fatal wrongnesses in the constitution of Trinity, let us put a period to this dialogue with our ardent wishes, that they, and whatever else is faulty therein, may be speedily rectified.

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AN
A B S T R A C T
OF
COUNT DOHERTY'S
CONVERSATION
WITH THE
COUNTESS OF ROSEFIELD,

IN REFERENCE TO
The Fancied Utility of the Grammar School,
The Merit of its Patrons,
And some other Interesting Subjects.

D U B L I N :

M D C C L X X X .



TO THE
LADIES OF IRELAND,

THE FOLLOWING

D I A L O G U E

IS WITH ALL RESPECT INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR MOST DEVOTED,

MOST OBEDIENT,

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.



AN
A B S T R A C T
OF
COUNT DOHERTY'S
C O N V E R S A T I O N
WITH THE
COUNTESS OF ROSEFIELD.

Count. **A** Certain acquaintance of ours appears to be an odd mortal, and seems very fond of paradoxes.

Countess. He indeed maintains, that in every family reason has a right to govern; that singular attention should be paid to the taste; and that the Roman tongue is unworthy the name of learning.

Count. Such presumption is intolerable. Are not the learned and polished nations of Europe firmly persuaded, that Latin is the foundation of all learning?

Countess. If so, the persuasion, as many branches of it existed and flourished long before Latin was invented, cannot redound much to their credit. Besides, that opinion is less universal than you imagine; for the French, who are the politest, if not the most learned people in the world, far from allowing Latin to be the foundation of literature, scarce admit it (Dr. Bayly vouches) to have even a share in a liberal education.

Count. That opinion I find then is losing ground; but should Latin be proscribed, what will become of the taste, a faculty which makes its appearance very early, as may be seen in the passion which most children have for ballads, &c. and in the manner wherein they are affected by them.

Countess. Is not the literary taste improvable by exercise, and does it not grow callous or torpid for want of it?

Count. Yes, but such want is easily prevented, and that power may from its dawn be abundantly exercised by means of the English classics, or of * translations in which the beauties of the originals are preserved.

Countess.

* Before a boy makes any advances in either, a smatch of heathen mythology would be very convenient, and might be easily acquired in the beginning of childhood, a period which commences with the eighth and closes with the fifteenth year, and is succeeded by puberty. — N. B. It is preceded by infancy, a stage which extends from the birth to the eighth year.

Countess. Would it not then be absurd to pass by those elegant compositions, and, for the exertion and improvement of it, to persist in depending on authors of whose beauties hardly one latinist in a hundred ever gets a glimpse? Is not the national taste, as long as it is kept trusting to them for culture, likely to continue in its present wretched, piteous, and shameful state?

Count. There is indeed a moral certainty of it; but would not the upper ranks be more attentive than they are to the cultivation of that principle, if it was of any moment or material significance?

Countess. The connoisseurs say, that it distinguishes civilized nations from savages, and the polite in all nations from the vulgar; that it has, by increasing the acuteness of the moral † sense, and supplying additional motives to rectitude, a powerful influence * on virtue; and that it enlarges the capacity of private happiness, qualifying a person for enjoyments to which others are absolute strangers. But, as it may be the interest of the connoisseurs to impose on the world, I shall address you for intelligence concerning that faculty:—Pray what is taste?

Count.

† Civilized nations have delicacy sufficient to perceive moral qualities in actions, which make no impression on a savage, but appear to him perfectly indifferent.

* What is virtuous and obligatory is often also beautiful and sublime: what is vicious may be at the same time mean, deformed, or ridiculous.

See GERARD ON TASTE.

Count. There is something exceeding dark and mysterious in it ; and you will oblige me by asking any but puzzling questions.

Countess. Then has the language of old Rome, as the populace and many of their betters fancy, a singular marvellous power of producing philosophers and gentlemen ?

Count. Had Latin, when in its zenith, any such power, all the peasants of Italy must, at that time, have been philosophers and gentlemen ; whereas they were then in fact vastly more rude and ignorant than the northern boors of the passing day. It is chiefly to accomplish youth for the college that this tongue is generally studied.

Countess. There is scarce one in five of your Latin scholars, who was ever designed for college ; and it is hardly conceivable, weak and depraved as human nature is, that the great world would idolize this dialect, or pay vastly more attention to it than to objects of infinitely superior value, unless they entertained some wild, confused, and extravagant opinions concerning it. However, should an honest peasant, to fit his child for the anvil or the loom, enter him in Eaton or any other Latin academy, what would you think ?

Count. I would think that Hodge was very fit for bedlam. Were weavers or blacksmiths ever known to be Virgilians or Horatians ?

Countess.

Countess. Before Latin ceased to be vernacular, thousands of them were both, and each a greater master of Latin than all the Latinists now living.

Count. Nevertheless, what in the name of wonder has classic scholarship to do with waving linen, or making horse-shoes?

Countess. As much as it has to do with making laws, or administering justice. Were not as able legislators and as excellent magistrates as the world ever beheld, totally unacquainted with that scholarship?

Count. I confess it; and that our own countrymen, before they arrive at eminence in those illustrious characters, generally forget their classic literature; which is a plain indication of its inutility in regard to them.

Countess. This unexpected coincidence of our sentiments encourages me to propose another question. Is it not the duty of noble peers and opulent squires, to fit their eldest sons for the senate and the bench; I mean, for the commission of the peace, and for seats in parliament?

Count. It unquestionably is; but how shall they discharge it?

Countess. By instructing their heirs in at least the rudiments of those arts and sciences which are preparative for, or subservient to legislation and magistracy; and by putting them afterwards to * college, that

* By college is meant a seminary wherein the belles lettres and sciences, or polite literature and philosophy, are taught in the mother tongue, the language wherein they are now generally studied in our universities.

that they may be perfected in that erudition, which is so valuable that all their descendants should embark very early in the pursuit of it.

Count. You should have excepted those who were destined for the church, Latin being a canonical qualification for the priesthood.

Countess. Is not the Roman dialect naturally as little related to or connected with the sacerdotal office, as it is with carpentry, masonry, or cookery? —But perhaps you have dreamed of a close affinity or connection with the latter.

Count. Quite otherwise; a yeoman would, in my opinion, be well intitled to a place in Swift's hospital, did he, to qualify his son for any one of those occupations, or for an apprenticeship to it, send him to a Latin school: but is the yoking of childhood to the business of that school, as inexcusable in the beau monde, as it evidently would be in the canaille, or mobility?

Countess. It would be far more excusable in the latter; not only as the plebeians are less intelligent than the upper classes, but as they have less need than the grandees of a rational institution, I mean, of one that is accommodate to the attainment of truth, wisdom, and virtue; perfections in the very ideas whereof, it would be charitable to think, that most parents are extremely deficient, or egregiously mistaken.

Count.

Count. They undoubtedly are; and was not an ample portion of the trash or stuff which passes with them for virtue, wisdom, and knowledge, the ordinary produce of a grammar-school, my brother would not urge as he does his eldest son, who never opened a book since he left Westminster, to offer himself a candidate for a certain English borough. But should the youngster comply, before he gets acquainted with that learning wherein every member of either house ought to be an adept, I will recommend it to his mother, who has a large estate in her own power, to disinherit him.

Countess. Though Latin scholarship be no more allied to legislation than to housewifery, yet that advice, should he, in compliance with the sense of the nation, fancy that it qualifies for the legislative, would be cruel.

Count. Your intelligence concerning the opinion of the public on this head, favours of the Paris a-la-main; for the study of Latin, as it and the mother tongue differ not only in construction, but often in the * application and † pronounciation of even the common names, manifestly tends to vitiate the student's English, and so unfit him for shining in the parliamentary debates. Besides, several passages of

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* LATIN.

Ratio; reason, a proof, &c.

Canon; a salary, &c.

Nostrum, opera, species, odium, &c.

ENGLISH.

Ratio; proportion.

Canon; a dignitary.

† Orátor.

Audítor.

O'rator. †

A'uditor.

By common names are here meant the Latin words which the English have without any variation adopted.

the Roman poets, their fine eulogies on the great butchers of the human species, and the horrid examples of the heathen gods, and classic heroes, as well as the unavoidable discipline of your Latin schools, have a corruptive influence on the minds of youth, and a savage-making tendency.

Countess. If the representation you have given be a true picture, such of the young nobility and gentry as are intended for parliament, or the magistratic function, in any kingdom that does not breath slaughter or affect brutality and barbarism, ought to be kept at the greatest distance from those seminaries.

Count. Can then the peaceable civilized people of Great Britain imagine, that the grammar-school or classic scholarship qualifies for the legislature?

Countess. There is nothing you can conceive which protestants, who give themselves leave to fancy, that this heathen literature is a qualification for the christian priesthood, are not capable of imagining.

Count. It must then be highly proper in me to apprise so near a relative as a brother's son, that, if there be in the British code any statute which does not chime with rectitude, every commoner should, at his peril, take notice of it.

Countess. You may safely venture to assure him, that, in the purest human code, there is a plurality of such statutes, and that their continuance must involve those, whose duty it is to repeal them, in an immensity of guilt.

Count.

Count. By producing an instance from a code, which is deemed the envy and admiration of the world, you will gratify a particular friend.

Countess. Reason and equity requiring that punishments be in some measure proportioned to crimes, would not annexing the highest punishments to * offences that are far short of the blackest crimes be iniquitous and unreasonable? Or since the life of a man is infinitely more valuable † than a sheep, a cow, a horse, &c. must not the punishing of theft capitally be vastly disproportionate to its demerit, or unjust and unlawful? And is not killing a person wilfully or unlawfully, or the unjust taking away a man's life, palpable murder?

Count. Tho' a privation of life for stealing cannot, as it seems to clash with the moral law, be vindicated in a state of nature; yet, in a state of civil society, may not an act of parliament authorize it? Nay, in case of stealth or rapine, does not an act of the sovereign power lay subjects under a positive obligation of inflicting the pains of death,

Countess. There is not a power upon earth, whose act can oblige to such horrid injustice, or sanctify murder any more than it can consecrate blasphemy, or make perjury right and lawful. But this punishment is said to be as impolitic as it is iniquitous;

* The highwayman is sentenced to be hanged as well as the murderer.

† Should the human life be thought by any Christian to be here over-rated, let him consider in whose image man was formed, and whose son died for him.

tous; and, if so, must it not, was all iniquity out of the question, involve the senate, whose duty it is to study the welfare of the community, in a world of guilt?

Count. What! does not the legal excision of pick-pockets and highwaymen contribute to the maintaining of peace and order, and to the preserving and securing of property?

Countess. Yes, and to the depopulating and brutalizing of a country; which evils might, by the substituting of servitudes in lieu of murderous executions, be totally avoided, and other salutary purposes, conjointly with those for which this shocking iniquity was destined, be obtained; such as making reparation to the injured proprietors, and the reclaiming of delinquents.

Count. That substitute considered as a provision for the safety of property, would not, I fear, prove effectual.

Countess. Nor does the capital punishment. How often is property violated at the very gallows, even whilst the sheriff is embruving his hands in blood?

Count. Notwithstanding, those examples make a deep impression on many of the spectators.

Countess. Yet, permanent examples, which every body must see, would, on the whole, make a greater impression than transient examples, which are seen by few comparatively. Besides, was the capital punishment exchanged for hard labour, and
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the issues or profits rightly applied, would not that tenderness of conscience, and the prudential motives, which now often restrain men from the prosecuting of thieves and robbers, make them active in their prosecution; and as pilfering or pillaging delinquents could then have little chance of escaping, stealth and rapine would soon become very rare.

Count. Amongst those criminals, even when rarest, shall not incorrigibles be sometimes found, or lazy miscreants who will never be induced by our Irish discipline to comply with their respective sentences?

Countess. Let such be exposed to sale in the sugar islands, and the price of each applied to compensate the damage he did, and the expence incurred by prosecuting and transporting him.

Count. As those truths, however obvious and important, are strange and new to my sex, they shall be transmitted to my nephew, and I will insist on his doing what every single peer and commoner ought to do, I mean to change his state, that he may upon the bills that are pending in parliament, and on the qualities of the old statutes and canons, have a friend to consult*, whose early education was, as to tendency, widely different from his own. Yet I may be mistaken,

* Should Lord Supine, Sir Daſtyle Spondee, and Squire Gerund cry out, that the advising with the ladies, in cases where rectitude is concerned, would be an everlasting derogation to the noblemen and gentlemen of England, who must, as they were liberally and regularly bred, be much better acquainted with the nature of virtue, and more strongly attached to it. In answer to this exclamation

taken, perhaps the boarding-school is prolific of an aversion to letters, of a bias towards heathenism *, and of a malignant spirit, or ferocious turn.

Countess. It is exceeding unapt to produce any thing of that kind, and therefore this education must, in regard to the senatorian and clerical accomplishments, be less noxious than that of the grammar-school, whose aptitude for such vile productions was lately urged by yourself.

Count. However, does the boarding-school in the judgment of the fair actually qualify for the legislature and the church?

Countess. There is not a lady in Ireland weak enough to believe that it is capable of qualifying for either; whereas myriads of your sex fondly conceit

mation I would observe, that in one year those noblemen and gentlemen are notoriously chargeable with more immorality and licentiousness than the ladies are in a century; that certain actions, flagrantly vicious, were dignified by them in defiance of the fair, who cordially detest every vile abuse of dignity; and that the very maintaining of those horrid abuses is highly atrocious, and of vastly greater prejudice to society than all the offences with which the ladies are impeached by malice itself.

Should Sir Daçtyle protest, that the hurt arising from those abuses cannot, if we may rely on the experience of past ages, extend beyond our noble selves, I would beseech his honour to ask its grand papa, did not profane swearing, after its ennoblement, spread prodigiously in low life? And did not such of the plebeians, as presumed to swear like lords, retain the practice long after its degradation?

* Most of the infidels in all christian countries are latinists.

ceit that the grammar-school, instead of disqualifying, qualifies for both.

Count. I own it, and that a lamentable deficiency in qualifications, which both of them ever did and ever will want, is chiefly owing to this idle ridiculous conceit.

Countess. Idle it is in the highest degree; for Virgil's narrative of Eneas's peregrination and adventures, and the metamorphoses described by Ovid, do not furnish a better preparation for the black gown than the Fairy Tales, Gulliver's Travels, and Don Quivedo.

Count. Nervertheless, by studying the school authors, boys will become acquainted with the language of old Rome as well as with her legends and superstition, and may not the tomes of theology, where-with Latin is stored, be allowed to palliate the saddling of the protestant hierarchy with that dialect.

Countess. No, for were those tomes of any material use to the clerical order, they would not, in the Island of Saints, be such rarities as fame says they are. Besides, translations of them may be compassed at less expence than is, in consequence of the saddling, now incurred by only a biennial pursuit of that tongue.

Count. I apprehend you, and should a reverend assembly, consisting of œconomists, reflect on the immense saving that would be made by procuring versions of those tomes, and resting in them, it might, I acknowledge, be restrained from that saddling,

dling, or excited to suppress it by prudential considerations.

Countess. Ay, and by others that are far more interesting, and which, was translating made treason, ought to prevail. If the priesthood was ordained or instituted by God, would it bespeak any great modesty in a General Council to tack Latin to the culture which Deity appointed, or to the qualifications which he prescribed ?

Count. It would rather betray presumption, for it would be treating the prescriptions of heaven as if they were defective or incompetent, and it would, if God alone has authority to appoint those qualifications, be invading the prerogative of the Most High.

Countess. But was a little tacking allowable, yet if certain of the divine qualifications demand a long series of studious labour for their attainment, would the loading of the priesthood, with such an additional course of grievous drudgery, as Latin requires, argue in a convocation any great degree of benevolence ? Or would it, since this drudgery, as you always begin with it, is apt to prejudice * against the divine qualifications and perpetuate a neglect of them, display in a synod any great sense of religion ?

Count. It would rather proclaim impiety and malevolence in both ; and since the tacking of Latin to the

* This drudgery, when reluctantly exerted, as it commonly is in a grammar-school, is naturally productive of an antipathy to that kind or sort of labour.

the priesthood would be not only presumptuous and imprudent, but would, if the divine qualifications are difficult, seem impious and cruel too, we must conclude that this tacking, there being real difficulty in their acquisition, is pregnant with a complication of turpitude; and therefore, for the relief of the priesthood the higher powers should be warmly plied with curtain lectures. But to cure an English dignity of his attachment to the established form of breeding, will his lady's reiterating and enlarging on your recent objections suffice or always prove effectual?

Countess. If they don't, she will humbly enquire of his grace; whether any of the apostles (one excepted) would, to gain the Indies, have, in the educating of young christians, countenanced the study of poems replete with paganism and *prostitutions of genius?

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Whether

* The eulogies and encomiums of the Roman poets on tyrants and usurpers afford instances of this prostitution that can hardly fail to poison the minds of youth. And the intrigues, amours, and exploits of the gods, goddesses, and heroes, with whom school-boys are daily conversing for years together, don't seem to be a whit more salutary.

Should Squire Gerund allege, that this mode of education in the least favour impurity, and subserve the misapplication of honour, a strange misapplication of it would be sometimes found among protestants themselves.

I, who am a recluse, and no antiquarian, would only ask his worship, Do not legions of the protestants, who are wedded to this mode, highly honour the seduction of the fair, and duelling, or illicit combats and lewdness, tho' both be^d confessedly against religion? But amongst the independent votaries of Mars and Venus, nay, among all the independents of Heathen antiquity, were these or the like nefarious actions, if confessedly irreligious, ever held or accounted honourable.

Whether the grammar-school education, as the Romish liturgy is in Latin, and as the Vulgate was canonized by the council of Trent, does not seem on these and other accounts * to be calculated for the meridian of Rome ?

Count. Notwithstanding, I flatter myself that the reverend doctors belonging to the reformed churches are stanch protestants, and have no bad design in adhering to the old mode.

Countess. What do those protestant doctors say the ends of education are ?

Count. To make good christians and good citizens, or members of the commonwealth, ends to which the business of a Latin school is not at all apposite; nay, that business is rather adverse † to them, and a certain bar to their attainment during the era of childhood, or the continuance of the parental jurisdiction.

Countess. Since the welfare of a child, the welfare of the church, the welfare of the state, and the will of our Saviour and of our God, do each give rise

* The worshipping of deceased persons, votive offerings, images, processions, &c. every mortal knows, were originally articles of the Pagan creed or divinity.

† This business if not ungrateful to its persuers is pleasing or neutral; if it be either of the latter, it is of course creative of such studious and sedentary habits as unqualify for the world or indispose for active and social life. If the business be ungrateful, which is nigh ever the case, it must, as having a manifest proneness to spoil or mar the temper, be likely to check the formation of good christians and good-citizens.

rise to or enforce the obligation of occupying the stage of childhood in such studies and exercises as are well adapted to those glorious ends, would it not be dreadfully shocking in a parent who, is a preacher of righteousness, to pass by the apposite means, or prostitute that period to a foreign, and much more to a discordant pursuit ?

Count. What if his reverence be under a mistake in reference to that pursuit, or a stranger to the suitable means.

Countess. Neither error nor ignorance, nor both together can, unless they be invincible, exculpate or screen from criminality ; and if in this case any doctor does, at the present juncture, find them insuperable*, I can't help thinking him a truly piteous spectacle, and so shall bid adieu to the subject.

Count. Not yet a little if you please. Though the teaching a boy Heathen literature, under the pretext of educating him, be a bad thing in a minister of the gospel, yet are not many of those teachers esteemed, by people of all ranks, exemplarily, good and upright men ?

Countess. In some popish countries several of the inquisitors are viewed in the same amiable light.

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* The ideas of the essential qualities belonging to a christian, a citizen, or a gentleman, may, in the fancy of a learned protestant, be joined with Latin scholarship ; as infallibility is, in the imagination of a learned Romanist, with the popedom ; or as, in the opinion many a residenter in Moorfields, the idea of royalty is united with his own person. However the coalition of those qualities, with that scholarship is, I dare say, seldom so strong, but that it may with moderate care and pains be dissolved.

And the most extensive destroyers of their fellow-men are here deemed heroes, and every where idolized.

Count. The world often misjudges, and the Free-thinker, as you don't incline to give a direct answer, comes very opportunely. Have we not instances of preceptors who are reckoned conspicuous for uprightness, and proposed, with respect to goodness, as models or patterns?

Freebinker. We have; nevertheless, the very best of those patterns, if possessed of a middling school, actually causes, in the space of a lustrum, infinitely more woe and misery than any Irish tyrant, or African savage does in the course of the longest life. And if it be unjust to imagine tasks and restraints for which one has no authority; and if the enforcing of the unwarrantable impositions with scourges be wrong, then the most upright of those models has, in a septennial pedagogue, done more wrong, or committed more injustice, than all the jail-birds in the province. Nay, should a gerund-grinder have an only son, and no pupil but him, yet his guilt would, before the expiration of the sixth year, swell to an enormous size, as well on account of the numberless arbitrary tasks of his imposing, as on account of his non-compliance with that religious obligation which a parent is under, in regard to the educating of a child, an obligation which can no more be fulfilled, by teaching a boy Latin, than by teaching him Welch, Shuggy-shoy, or Scobin.

Count. I acknowledge it cannot, and that should a father have, as you suggest, no authority to injoin those

those tasks, or to subject his son to the slavery and bondage, under which childhood groans in a Latin school ; the injunction and subjection, was it only for a week, would be iniquitous and inhuman. But are not all classes of people persuaded, that every parent is invested with that right and authority ?

Free. Yes, and those people are in general as firmly persuaded, that every citizen has a right to deal with smugglers, and to secrete as many hearths as he can.

Count. However, would it not indicate downright insanity to think, that any subject has a right to cheat the crown or even the meanest peasant ?

Free. What better or more rational would it be, to think that any man has authority to neglect his duty, or a right to act a part that is inconsistent with it. And is it not the duty of a parent to keep his progeny, whilst the parental dominion subsists, engaged in such studies and exercises as have an aptitude to form them into knowing, wise, and virtuous men, or good christians ? And is there any room to doubt the incompatibility of the Latin schools slavery and bondage, with those exercises and studies, to which it is an obvious and capital duty of a parent to consecrate childhood.

Count. Not the least ; and a parent therefore, having no right to yoke a child to the former, the subjugation may be fairly deemed a hideous compound of horrid iniquity and unnatural cruelty. However, let us suppose, that this bondage, slavery, &c. are not only compatible with those exercises and studies

dies which are the main constituents of a religious or rational education, but that their pernicious fruits or bad effects on the mind, are, at the dawn of puberty, annihilated by omnipotence.

Free. On even that supposition, no boy designed for the laick state, in high life, can, without an abuse of power or breach of trust, be immured in a Latin academy; because dominion is confided to the parent for the good of the child; and all the good which a lay nobleman or gentleman gains by that school, is vastly exceeded by the evil or wretchedness which he endured in it. Nay, I question, if there be a single lay grandee in any protestant kingdom, who would, for a hundred times the good he got by his Latin scholarship, submit to a repetition of that confinement, anguish, terror and toil, which it cost him.

Count. Nevertheless, for the daily imprisonment of several youngers in our literary tartarus, a sort of apology, if you admit my wild-supposition, may be made, as long as a certain canon is observed by the clergy.

Countess. Be that as it may; sure no apology can be devised for its reverend observers. Of all mankind, the trumpets of charity should be most cautious of laying such a stress on prophane or unnecessary literature, as will afford an excuse for that cruel incarceration from which childhood has little prospect of a deliverance.

Free. Let us not despair; in South Britain, is not this canon often treated as a nullity by the ordaining powers?

Countess.

Countess. Yet, as I don't find that any of those powers ever kept a fast, or discovered the least compunction or remorse for having treated it otherwise, my hope of seeing an extirpation of it there is very faint, and here Latin is now idolized by the lords of the lower creation.

Free. So was Bacchus in your own memory ; and those noble lords having imbibed the ladies just abhorrence of one idol, may they not be prevailed on to adopt their laudable indifference with respect to another, which being a poor, dead, intricate speech, has fewer allurements than the bottle itself?

Countess. They may, and it would be truly noble to emulate the distinguished by piety and virtue, which are the noblest of all distinctions. But prior to the attainment of that feminine indifference, must not the ideas [of dignity, wisdom, &c. which are associated with Latin, be disjoined?

Free. Yes, just as the brilliant and moral ideas formerly combined with copious potation, were not long since separated from it.

Countess. The separation, as the unnatural connection was the main support of hard drinking, a detestable practice which is pernicious to health, wealth, and industry, was greatly wanting.

Free. So is the disjunction, not only because the grammar-school, which is chiefly maintained by the like combination of incoherent ideas, is also hurtful to the same and to other valuable realities, but because

cause it is the visible curse and standing plague of childhood.

Countess. There are indeed noble peers, who, if pressed for some time with such considerations, would, in spite of their early prejudices, renounce this mode of breeding.

Count. Is there a peer in Ireland who, should he and his lady differ with respect to that mode, would not consent to call in a reverend doctor, and after giving him a detail of the arguments pro and con, submit to his determination?

Countess. I really don't know; but will venture to say positively, that notwithstanding the Hibernian doctor's known bias, every peeress in this island will readily sign the submission, provided that the doctor swears to determine on the merits that day se'nnight.

Count. His reverence will cheerfully take that oath, as a likely mean of stopping the mouths of his brethren, should judgment be given against their idol.

Free. Besides such an oath, though most of us be averse from thinking, and apt to rely on the infallibility of old England, can't miss satisfying the parties, that the doctor will, previously to any determination, dwell or fix his thoughts on the matter in debate, and consider it fully.

Count. The trusting a little to our neighbour in this business is very defensible; for the tutorage of the young

young nobility and gentry in South Britain being committed to the clergy, and preaching on the subject of education being the frequent practice of every person in it, we can't conceive that there is any English doctor, who has not ruminated at least an entire month on the established mode, and impartially examined the objections to which it is liable,

Free. After compleating the impartial examen, and month's rumination, should the doctor take but a momentary view of it, how does the Countess think would it operate on the divine, or affect him in the different characters of a patriot, a connoisseur or, man of taste, a christian, and a philosopher?

Countess. Must not the philosopher be shocked at this mode's repugnance to common humanity, and at its engrossing that critical period which should be mostly employed in the improvement of reason and accumulation of truth? * Must not the christian tremble at the danger to which pure religion, † and many of its professors, both young || and
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* Unless childhood be thus exercised, a boy will be actually found a weak, ignorant, empty creature, at the commencement of puberty, a stage wherein nature soon dictates or points to the hymeneal union.

† Religion is, from an intercourse with heathenism, in danger of corruption, a calamity which it has often felt.

|| Young academics are in danger of restless nights, painful days, aching hearts, and many other infelicities which few or none of them escape; and should the minds of youth be agreeably impressed with the sentiments of the school authors, would they not be in danger of conceiving a gout for war, or at least a predominant passion for honour,
bour,

old, § are exposed, by devoting childhood to the pursuit of heathen literature? Must not the connoisseur flame with indignation, * on seeing the poets of old Rome idolised in Great Britain, and made the capital object of its youth's studious attention? Must not the patriot shudder at the idea of that form of education which rages in his country, a form kept up by patrician prejudices and vulgar errors?

Count. I spoke without thinking, when I insinuated that the English are less thoughtless about the modish form of breeding, or less reluctant to scrutinize its pretensions, than my countrymen are. But what are the chief of the errors or prejudices to which you ascribe its support?

Countess.

nour, the ruling principle of the old heathen world. And would not a christian have ample cause to be alarmed at this danger, as 'tis not the empire of ambition, but the dominion of conscience, not the military cast, but the pacific turn, the gospel affects?

§ For wilfully embittering the stage of childhood, and neglecting to do it justice in regard to tuition, the old, or parents, are in danger of meeting with domestic trouble here, and hereafter with endless tribulation.

* The sacred classics, as their beauties infinitely surpass those of the Roman poets, must, in the eye of a connoisseur, appear vastly more worthy of the esteem and application of all ages. Mr. Pope affirms, that the scriptures of God contain the most elevated and sublime strokes of poetry, strokes as much superior to any thing heathenism can produce, as is Jehovah to Jupiter. But were the sacred volumes of no moment in reference to the taste, yet the cultivation of that faculty being the grand purpose of a connoisseur, and the beauties of the English classics being obvious to the generality of the British youth, would he not strive to substitute them in the place of the Roman classics, which cannot, as their beauties are now visible to only very few Latinists, be as well calculated for his favourite purpose.

Countess. The current persuasion, that Latin scholarship qualifies a gentleman for parliament, the magistratic function, the christian priesthood, and the beau monde or polite world; and that without it he can be but wretchedly accomplished for any one of them. This persuasion, however wild and extravagant, is now as universal throughout Great Britain, as the belief of its contamination by sorcery or witchcraft was, before and long after the reign of queen Elizabeth; and as this erroneous belief gave birth to a statute which actually proved the destruction of many poor, innocent, harmless creatures; so that persuasion did long foster, and does this day cherish schools which are the palpable scourge and permanent bane of early life.

Free. It is wonderful how that chimerical persuasion could get footing in any kingdom: of all foreign classics, the Roman are among the last that should be selected, to fit a young Briton for the court, the senate, the bench, and the pulpit.

Countess. So it would seem to me, both because the matter of those writings is mostly fabulous or romantic, and because the diction is intirely poetical; whereas the diction used in the senate, pulpit, &c. is wholly prosaic, and in all such places romance and fable are totally exploded.

Free. Your exceptions to the fitness of those poems to answer the avowed aims of their reputed friends, are so obvious and cogent, that I am beginning to think that something else is intended, and that parents do (the grammar-school being in

high vogue) knowingly sacrifice their children to the fashion.

Countess. As men have been, time immemorial, knowingly and willingly sacrificing their estates, their constitutions, and sometimes their lives to that demon, there is ground to suspect it; yet parents are not, perhaps, altogether as bad as you apprehend. Is yoking a boy to the grammar-school sacrificing him?

Free. It unquestionably is, and in the worst sense too: for the drudgery, bondage, and discipline * of those schools are visibly destructive to the happiness of childhood, and greatly obstruct its intellectual improvement; and as surely as fortitude, contentment, &c. belong to the moral specie, they are likewise hurtful to its virtue; and all Latinists, who have any feeling, and an idea of reason and morality, being fully sensible of those facts, must they not knowingly sacrifice their children to the fashion, by entering them, out of pure respect to it, in Eaton or Westminster?

Countess. Yes, but that, I flatter myself, seldom happens; for boys are generally lodged in those seminaries with a view to the enrichment of their heads, and to the polish of their manners, by the refining and enlightening power of Latin scholarship.

Free. O that it were so! Yet, since the most illiterate may easily discover, that there is no charm in this
scholarship,

* In lieu of this discipline, which directly tends to obduration, or the extinction of pity, should ambition and emulation be substituted, a profusion of envy and pride would shortly follow.

scholarship, or that it is not at all endued with any power of that kind, the sacrifices cannot avoid giving a very black † dye to all concerned in them.

Countess. Nevertheless, the religious state of the mistaken or deluded fathers, who aim solely at the good of the victims, or have it partly in contemplation, is less deplorable than that of the parents, who sacrifice their sons purely to the mode, or dragoon them into Latin scholars, merely because it is fashionable.

Count.

† I shall presume to remind my reader, that those immolations, if truth, wisdom and goodness be divine attributes, are offensive to heaven; that they, unless children be destitute of sensibility and natural rights, are inconsonant to justice and benevolence; that they, if a rational culture of youth be serviceable to society, are, by impeding it, prejudicial to the body politic; and that their genuine fruits (were the capital objections removed) would scarce be of the least use to the community, or to any of its members. Nay, let us suppose every Hibernian to be enabled, by a miracle, to express his thoughts in Latin, Dutch, French, Italian, German, and Arabic, as readily and properly as Swift did in English; this ability, 'tis manifest, would not make us a whit better landlords, generals, commissioners, merchants, burgessees, farmers, soldiers, labourers, or mechanics, than we now are; nor would those outlandish dialects add one scruple to the real knowledge, wisdom, and virtue of the nation, or of any individual in it. For what are they, but channels of science, or conduits of learning, mediums, which, with respect to its attainment, are needless to an adept in the mother tongue; and they must be perilous, as they tend to adulterate his expression in the natal speech, and so expose him in the line of an English writer, speaker, preacher, or companion. And as no Latinist, who has the smallest tincture of solid learning, can be a stranger to those truths, or to the effect which the construing of the Roman poets will have on a boy's virtue, &c. 'tis to be feared, that the sacrificers, for whom the Countess chiefly lamented, are exceeding numerous.

Count. However, that this dear bought scholarship may turn to some account, should not a boy's father (especially if there be a borough in the family) put him to college?

Countess. Yes; but that the folly committed, and guilt contracted, by putting him to Latin, may not be aggravated by matriculation, his father should first inform himself concerning the college course, and the rules of that society.

Count. Such a procedure would, in a native of England, be altogether ridiculous. Every body there knows, that the two universities are the eyes of the nation; that in them the bishops, and the leading members of both houses of parliament, have ever been educated; and that those oracles are, and always were, perfectly qualified for the legislature.

Countess. I should be sorry to think so. Did South Britain never groan under statutes and customs that were utterly incongruous to rectitude? Can all the statutes in its present code, and all the usages whereby 'tis governed, stand the test of a fair enquiry? Have you not heard from the best authority, that the law of England is so expensive and so dilatory, as to be the greatest grievance of the nation?

Count. Its dilatoriness and expensiveness, are, indeed, a dreadful grievance, and enough to bring an odium on the law itself; and the obliquity* of some things, in the code of South Britain, is, you lately satisfied me, easily improvable.

Countess.

* By the English law a *felo de se* forfeits his goods and chattels. Is not this forfeiture frequently attended with a cruelty and injustice to individuals? Is it not enough for a wife and children to lose a husband

Countess. It would seem then, that the qualifications of the college bred parliamentary heroes, were, in former times, far short of perfection. But can the sages, who now figure and dictate in the British senate, subscribe to the answer you gave to my questions?

Count. As the dilatoriness and expensiveness of the law have often been, nay, daily are the undoubted ruin of many an honest man; as many a prudent man is restrained by them from suing for his undoubted rights; and as, on seeing the difficulty of coming at justice, many a fraud and piece of villany are hourly committed, there can hardly be a member of either house, who is not apprized and convinced of, at least, the grievance.

Countess. After this conviction, should the leading members, without the shadow of temptation, acquiesce in a woful grievance, which they are under the most sacred obligations to redress, what idea ought the world to entertain of them or their education?

Count. The bell rings very seasonably.

husband and a father by a death, attended with such shocking circumstances, without suffering for his guilt, and being reduced to beggary by the sentence of the law. See the Considerations on Criminal Law. But that the criminal law is not of the British code, the only constituent which is iniquitous, impolitick, and inhuman, will, perhaps, on some future day, be fully and clearly evinced.

F I N I S.

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